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Daily chart

Who's bigger?

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More countries are saying that China is world's leading economic power

AMERICA has been the world's leading economic power since 1871. It has contributed some 30% on average to world GDP since 1960 and made up 22% of the cake in 2011 (at market exchange rates). China meanwhile, contributes just 10%, but has seen its share of world GDP rise meteorically, from just 1.8% in 1991. The perception in some countries that America is no longer the world's pre-eminent economy is therefore somewhat premature. As the chart shows, such perceptions vary enormously across the world according to a new poll carried out in 21 countries by the Pew Research Centre. There has been an increasing swing towards China; in 2008 just one country polled thought China more economically powerful than America, now 11 do. The residents of the two countries at the heart of the discussion seem to have a rather self-deprecating view of themselves: on balance, Americans believe China to be more economically powerful, whereas the Chinese think America is. Perceptions aside, on current trends, China will surpass America somewhere around 2018 according to our interactive chart.

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